School Improvement Plan Process

Sioux Falls Catholic Diocese

To carry out her saving mission, the Church uses, above all, the means, which Jesus Christ has given her. She also uses other means, which at different times and in different cultures have proved effective in achieving and promoting the development of the human person. The Church adapts these means to the changing conditions and emerging needs of mankind. (Cf. Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et Spes," 4.) 1

Prepared for the Catholic Schools of the Sioux Falls Diocese
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Introduction:
Why This Process?

The Catholic schools of the Sioux Falls Diocese are a shining example of places where the church forms and promotes the whole person. When executed with forethought and precision, schools can become the center of the community where "*a specific concept of the world, of man, and of history is developed and conveyed.*" 2

For decades the Catholic schools have made a significant contribution to the evangelizing mission of the church. They have shared '*responsibility for the social and cultural development of the different communities and peoples to which it belongs.*"3 They have played an integral part in the pastoral care of the family, in the spirituality of believers, and in the material development of those who are less fortunate. The many women and men working and teaching in our Catholic schools have contributed to the building up of the church and influenced the field of education. Simply put, the Catholic schools have been the fulfillment of the church's highest aspirations for pastoral ministry. They have enabled young people to develop their own personalities and, at the same time, to grow in "*that new life which has been given them in Baptism.*"

Recent times have proved challenging for Catholic schools. Enrollment is declining and educators are faced with a new breed of demands that far surpass those of previous generations. The Catholic school is
confronted with children and young people who experience the difficulties of the present   time. Pupils who lack authentic models to guide them, a profound apathy where ethical and religious formation is concerned... There are also situations in the political, social and cultural sphere which make it harder or even impossible to attend a Catholic school.... Finance is a source of further difficulties... Moreover, such financial strain not only affects the recruiting and stability of teachers, but can also result in the exclusion from Catholic schools of those who cannot afford to pay, leading to a selection according to means which deprives the Catholic school of one of its distinguishing features, which is to be a school for all. 4

By implementing a full-scale planning effort that paints a realistic picture of the future vitality of the school, we can offer a specific list of strategies and tactics that can be accomplished within a reasonable time frame. This document describes the process and is meant to assist schools to assess their current status and future viability, and to plan a series of actions that will

strengthen the schools' viability and meet the state requirements for accreditation.

Notes

1. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "The Catholic School," March 19, 1977. Vatican The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccath educ_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html, December 1, 2003.

2. Ibid.

3. The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium," December 28, 1997. Vatican The Holy See. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/re_con_ccath educ_doc_27041990_school2000_en.html, December 1, 2003.
4. Ibid.

The Process

Most of the schools in the Sioux Falls Diocese are single parish-centered, while some are maintained by multiple parishes. Regardless of their affiliation, their goal is the twofold purpose of Catholic education - growth in holiness and mastery of basic skills needed to live a good moral life, taking responsibility for the "building of the kingdom." Each school follows a diocesan curriculum in religion, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Hopefully, this assessment process will serve as a useful barometer to determine the health of a school's future and to meet state accreditation requirements. The user could continue to refine or modify the criteria or other documents, while still using the same process. Here's how it works.

Data Collection

A list of criteria that can be used to assess the viability of the school, called the Assessment Instrument, is attached to this document. (Appendix E) The school then collects data under each criterion. The data to be collected are of two types: concrete, quantitative data and qualitative data gathered primarily through discussions. Specific action steps to improve each area perceived as weak also come out of interviews and discussions.

A key part of the data gathering process is the assistance of a facilitator. The role of this external facilitator is to support the administration in attaining important information for creating the Improvement Plan document. The facilitator acts as an objective consultant to offer the school a bridge between the demands of the job and the demands of the assessment project.

The facilitator's preliminary tasks are to spend time becoming familiar with the viability assessment guidelines and to initiate introductory meetings with the administrator (s) (Appendix B and C). The facilitator becomes familiar with the particular issues of the school and explains how important it is to get buy-in from the primary stakeholders in the school community. The primary task of the facilitator is then to facilitate the discussion meetings that will be held to gather qualitative data and suggestions for improvements. It should be made clear that the facilitator will provide guidance on the final document, but will not actually write the document.

Creation of the Improvement Plan

The school (primarily the administrator) creates an Improvement Plan that organizes and summarizes, around the list of criteria, what is learned about the school and the

proposed corrective actions that surfaced from the discussion. Each action item is written up on a form found in Appendix F. This Improvement Plan is submitted to the School Board for approval and then to the necessary state and diocesan departments.

The Improvement Plan identifies the risk factors, and action steps are developed to address them. The facilitator checks to see that the document is basically set up in the correct format. It is up to the facilitator to offer his or her services for additional feedback and/or planning sessions with each group as a means of moving forward on action items.

Implementing the Plan

A final meeting is set up with the facilitator, the administration and all groups of stakeholders to ensure accountability. Goals are made clear, action items are assigned and completion dates are set. Dialogue among the groups should continue to ensure that the steps are working or to provide additional assistance as needed. This provides accountability.

Most likely the school board will play a key role in implementing the Improvement Plan and its action steps. If there is no board, one of the actions steps should be to create a permanent school board/committee. Regular communication back to the stake holders on the improvement plan and progress toward implementation should take place and may also be the responsibility of the board.

An excellent source of support services that provides ongoing direction and information to both beginning and established boards is membership in the National Association of Boards, Commissions and Councils of Catholic Education (NABCCCE) - part of NCEA.

Data Gathering

The most time-consuming part of the process is gathering and distributing the technical data that serve as the foundation for discussions about the school. In some cases the school financial officer can provide the school's prior two years of financial records and assist the school in preparing a projection for the next two years. The school office and provide enrollment data and standardized test scores. This document will provide materials on how the process would work, including the following:

Assessment Process Steps (appendix A)
Facilitator's Responsibilities (appendix B)
 Facilitator's Process (Appendix C)
 Data Sheet for use in collecting helpful information (Appendix D)
 Assessment Instrument (Appendix E)

Action Item Form for use in creating plans to address weaknesses (Appendix F)
Assessment Instrument Scoring Form (Appendix G)

The following list provides additional details about the *quantitative data* to be reported on the Data Sheet in Appendix D:

Enrollment. Figures for the past 3-5 years to identify a trend (as opposed to fixating on one year that could skew understanding of the situation) and to view the population by grade level (to demonstrate if there was a pattern of losing students after a certain grade).

Class size. Grade-by-grade fluctuations can offer insight into what direction the school is headed as well as aid resource allocation planning.

Standardized test scores. Aggregate scores that could be compared with Catholic schools locally, statewide, and nationally are to be identifies.

Faculty turnover. It is important to understand the number of teachers and principals who have been replaced each year; again, as a means of illustrating the direction of the school.

Budgeting; Too many schools don't have the financial information they need to make effective decisions. It is important to know the amount of tuition per student (along with any built-in discounts and scholarships), how much it costs per pupil to run the school (appendix M), and how much money, if any, the parish (es) have given to subsidize the school. Additional information around variable costs like maintenance, utilities, insurance premiums, etc. is also important.

Revenue Sources. To ascertain whether the school is actively seeking alternative sources for the money required to be financially stable, some of the key questions to ask are: what percentage of the budget is covered by tuition? How much money is being generated from grants and foundations? What kind of fundraising activities are typical and are they really adding to the bottom-line?

To collect the *qualitative data,* meetings with the administration, pastor and facilitator are scheduled with appropriate stakeholder groups, such as the parish council, finance council, school board, parent organizations, and school staff. It is preferable to meet with these specific groups during their regularly scheduled sessions to ensure higher attendance. Each meeting should cover the goal of the assessment, the requirements of the Improvement Plan document, and what the various stakeholders can do to move forward in terms of school viability.

The facilitator is charged with keeping each of the meetings on track and covering all three major criteria: Catholic Spirit, Excellence in Education, and Temporal Vitality. The facilitator assists with generating

discussion around the quantitative data points listed above, and with extracting qualitative feedback on a variety of issues.

toward the end of the discussion on each point, the facilitator should draw out suggestions for specific action items that would improve the situation. Each action is later written up on an "Action Item Form" (Appendix F). Each item is to be on a separate form, which includes specific, timely, and measurable examples of an action the school has taken or will take to address any gaps that exist. For example, a goal "to increase enrollment" is laudable but not measurable. The same goal written as "to increase enrollment by 25 students" or "to increase enrollment by 10 percent each year" become measurable. The action item should include the person(s) responsible and any potential costs.

The facilitator's task is not to act as a subject-matter expert on schools or actually write the Improvement Plan documents (although facilitators could review the draft document before it is submitted to the school board, diocese office or state education department). The facilitator could also be available, on a limited basis, to participate in ongoing feedback sessions and/or to offer support on some of the action items.

Criteria of Assessment

These are used to guide the data collection process, and will provide a structure for assessing the data. The three criteria are: Catholic spirit, Excellence in Education, and Temporal Vitality (Appendix E).

Catholic Spirit

The first of the criteria used to assess the success of a school is its overall Catholicity. This criterion assesses the internal elements of a school that are clearly established - its spiritual life, evangelization efforts, sense of social interaction, and more.

"*Catholic schools are at once places of evangelization, of complete formation, of enculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different religions and social backgrounds.*" (John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa, n. 102.)*

This Catholic identity is one of the very important reasons parents/guardians bring their children to Catholic schools. That's why it is important to understand very specific elements of a student's day.
Is the school setting aside special time for daily mass and/or prayer?
How is the Catholic part of the curriculum being taught?
Are elements of the faith integrated into the rest of the curriculum?

Are students required and/or encouraged to actively serve within the parish and in the community?
How are values integrated?
How are students asked to work with one another in the spirit of service?
Are class sizes too small to share new ideas or too large to allow for meaningful interaction?
Are teachers encouraged to interact with students, parents/guardians, and other teachers in the context of service?
Is faith formation included in their professional development?
Are teachers encouraged to find opportunities to better understand their faith?

Parents/guardians play an important role in this too. The following questions might be asked:
Are parents/guardians encouraged to attend Mass on a regular basis with their children?
Are they participating in other liturgical and spiritual practices in the church?
Is there a strong connection between volunteering in the school and volunteering in the parish?
Are parents/guardians helping to evangelize nontraditional students? After all, the Catholic school is not reserved to Catholics only, but is open to all those who appreciate and share its qualified education.

But to take on such enormous tasks the school needs the buy-in of the local parish priest(s) and parish pastoral council(s).
Are faculty, staff, parents/guardians, and students actively participating, and does the parish understand the mission of the school?
What is the historical perception of the school by the parish priest and other key stakeholders?
Do they perceive the school to be a burden?
Do they cherish its presence and seek to increase its enrollment and spread its influence?
Where do the local board, pastor(s) and others stand on the long-term viability of the school.

Finally, what is the relationship of the school to the surrounding community? The community dimension should be fostered. However, very few schools have hard data on this, but at least they could share their own word-of-mouth experiences.

Excellence in Education

The second of the tree criteria used to assess the success of a school is its overall academic performance. This criterion measures student, faculty, and staff

achievement against state mandates and diocesan, board, or parish expectations.
How do students' grade point average or standardized test scores compare to overall diocesan and stat and national scores?
Is there an increasing level of excellence attained each year?
What potential is there to raise the standard over a certain period of time?
Has the school's leadership hired certified and competent staff?
Does the school have an ability to hire and retain qualified teachers?
Are positions continually unfilled?
Does the school's administration maintain an objective process for firing teachers when necessary?
 Are teachers encouraged and provided support for lifelong learning?

Competent and qualified leadership is another key to a successful school. Since principals sometimes can be the unstable part of the staff, identifying any extraordinary burdens of management and administrative tasks falling on the faculty is important.
For example, who is responsible for maintaining professional development plans?
Does the school have its own internal improvement processes in place?
 Is the school aware of new state requirements and can it continually meet the guideline of the diocese, and state education department?
What to look for here is an indication of whether or not continuous improvement is part of the culture of the school. Too often schools can fall into the trap of meeting minimum requirements for the purpose of accreditation, but then tend toward the status quo one left alone to manage the enormous joy of the day-to-day tasks.

Temporal Vitality

The christian faithful are to foster Catholic schools by supporting their establishment and their maintenance in proportion to their resources." The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium," December 28, 1997. Vatican The Holy See

The only problem with this quote is that the phrase "*in proportion to their resources*" *is* difficult to define. Many schools were founded with the promise that they could be self-sufficient; now they struggle with charging a fair tuition rate-based on cost per pupil-over and against the economic realities of the families of the students. (For a

definition of cost per pupil, see Appendix M.) Many parishes find it difficult to maintain a minimum level of service in other ministries when the school (which makes up a much smaller percentage of the parish population) requires financial support. Many parishes don't understand what it takes to budget for a school and fight back when collection plate dollars are given to support a school.

The key to understanding this balance, of course, is enrollment.
Has the board or the school assessed community demographics?
What is the number of households, Catholic population, ages of children?
Can the school quantify whether or not the community is still brimming with families who want their children educated in Catholic schools?

Schools must be able to project enrollment trends even if they're only looking at the baptismal records of the parish.

Does the school have in place the appropriate management systems for setting and balancing a budget? Often the parish is subsidizing the school, and it is important to know if there is a formal process for determining the subsidy and how far in advance the school foresaw a shortfall. Then, establish whether or not there is a trend over time for an increase or decrease in the subsidy and how one school compares with other schools in the diocese in terms of the amounts of the subsidies.
How much does the subsidy average per pupil?
How does it impact tuition?
What is the trend in tuition? Is the tuition rate still providing for needs-based assistance to families?

Some of the above questions will naturally lead to whether or not there is a long-range fiscal plan.
Are there diverse sources of income?
Does the school maintain an endowment with a plan to grow it?
Does the school have a viable development program?
Is there a marketing plan and is someone with professional experience managing it?

Many schools do not have the money to hire a full-time marketing and communications professional, but there may be someone in the school, the parish, or the community who is willing to volunteer time to act in this role. That person's first priority must be to achieve maximum utilization of externally funded programs and other initiatives as appropriate, such as grants, technology programs, and federal and state title programs.

Finally, it is equally important to know whether the facility can support an ongoing full-service education program.
What is the condition of the physical plant?

Are the critical health, safety, security, and environmental factors being addressed?
What is the ratio of under-utilization against overall building capacity?

 The key to the temporal vitality discussion is to communicate honestly and openly. Also keep in mind that many of the participating groups will want to rush into the discussion of financial stability, but it will be important to make sure the groups cover Catholic Identity and Excellence in Education first, in order to make sure the future viability of a school is not simply based on the question of cash on hand.

Appendix A
Improvement Plan Steps

Gather quantitative data.

a. Enrollment

b. Class size

c. Standardized test scores

d. Faculty turnover

e. Budgeting

f. Revenue sources

2. Engage a facilitator.

3. Hold preliminary meeting with facilitator, administrators, and key leaders.

4. Hold meetings where facilitator, administrators, and key leaders meet with stakeholder groups (for example, school board, parish council, finance council, and parent organizations, and staff).

5. Complete a draft of Improvement Plan Document, including Action items.

6. Hold final meeting to review Improvement Plan Document for completeness, clarity, etc.

7. Receive report from the group to which the Improvement Plan was submitted.

8. Conduct follow-up feedback and/or planning sessions as necessary to implement   Action items.

Appendix B
Facilitator's Responsibilities

Key Role: to support the administration in attaining important feedback for the Improvement Plan.

To be familiar with the Improvement Plan process

To be aware of the particular issues of the school

To provide guidance for the writing of the Improvement Plan report

To meet with the administration team that will accompany him/her to stake holder meetings

To meet with stakeholder groups during their scheduled meetings to assess the criteria as outlined on the instrument, Criteria for Assessing the Future of a Catholic School (Appendix E)

To identify action items by the end of each stakeholder's meeting

To meet with the administrative team to review the draft document to ascertain if the feedback from the stakeholder groups is included, goals are clear, action items are assigned, and target completion dates are set.

Appendix C
Facilitator's Process for Catholic School Improvement Plan

The key role for a facilitator is to support the administration in attaining important feedback for creating the Improvement Plan Document to be submitted to the group requesting the plan.

Preparation: Facilitator spends 2-3 hours becoming familiar with the guidelines surrounding the Improvement Plan and assessment process. Initial contacts must be made and a meeting set up with the appropriate administrators.

First Meeting: Administrators, key leaders (pastor, board chairs) and facilitator (1 hour)
Discussions should center on the need for buy-in from the primary stakeholders in the parish. The facilitator should understand the major issues surrounding the school. It should be clear that the administrators, not the facilitator, author the final Improvement Plan Document using the input gathered.

Feedback Meetings: Administrators and facilitator meet with the school board, parish council, finance council and parent organization, and school staff. It is preferable to meet with these groups during their regularly scheduled sessions to ensure higher attendance.
The meetings should be long enough to cover the topic but not lengthy and should cove the goal of the Improvement Plan process, the requirements of the document, and what the various stake holders can do to move forward in the plan.
The facilitator is charged with keeping the group on track and covering all three major criteria: Catholic Spirit, Excellence in Education, and Temporal Viability. The facilitator also focuses on surfacing action items by the end of each meeting.

Final Meeting: Administrators, key leaders, and facilitator (1 hour)
This final meeting should act as a final opportunity for accountability. The facilitator can make comments on the draft: to make sure that all groups of stake holders are included, goals are clear, action items are assigned, and completion dates are set. The facilitator also should check that the Improvement Plan document is set up in the correct format as required by the state education department.
It is the responsibility of the facilitator neither to act as the subject matter expert, nor to edit and/or rewrite the document. The facilitator's role should always stay at the level of process.

Appendix D
Data Sheet

Criterion*

A.3.	Enrollment	%Catholic	
		% Non-Catholic	
A.4.	Class Size	Average	
		Minimum	
		Maximum	
B.1	Test Scores	Subject 1	
		Subject 2	
		Subject 3	
		More?	
B.2.	Faculty	% Turnover	
		Avg. yrs of service	
		Year-long vacancies	
C.1.	Enrollment		
	Neighborhood Demographics	Number of households? Age of children? Catholic population?	
C.2.	Budget	Per-pupil cost	
		Parish subsidy %	
		Other schools' per-pupil cost	
		Tuition	
		% Increase per year	
C.3.	Revenue sources	Tuition -% of total	
		Grants- % of total	
		Fundraising - % of total	
C.5.	Facility	Age of buildings	

*This column indicates the criterion on Appendix E into
which this data will be integrated.

Appendix E
Criteria for Catholic School Improvement Plan

Instructions

Part I: Narrative and/or List
Using information gathered from the meetings with the parent/guardian association, the board of education, the parish pastoral and finance councils, and the school staff, provide written evidence via narrative and/or list specific documentation (citing specific examples) of your school's achievement (or non-achievement) of each criterion. You must specifically address each criterion in all of the three main categories (catholic spirit, excellence in Education, and Temporal vitality).

Written responses must include specific examples of things you have previously done or things that you are currently doing to address the criteria. If you haven't previously considered the criteria as a priority, write that and address it in Part II as an Action Item.

Part II: Action Items
Using the template supplied, list Action Items for each of the criteria listed. Each Action Item should have no more than a 12-month window for completion. Make sure the Action Item is written in *measurable* terms. For example, a goal to "increase enrollment" is laudable but not measurable. The same goal written in this way, "increase enrollment by 25 students" or "increase enrollment by 10% each year," becomes a goal that is easily measurable.

When completing the Action Item Form, be certain to list the Action Item, the person(s) responsible, the specific tasks that will be completed to meet the needs of the item, the timeline for completion, and any costs related to the Action Item.

Utilize the expertise of your facilitator to assist with the process of completing the tasks listed on this page. Remember that Diocesan personnel also stand ready to provide assistance at any time. If you are unsure how to do something, please ask.

Criteria for Catholic School Improvement Plan

A. Catholic Spirit
1. Strong catholic identity (daily prayer, instruction, service, integration into curriculum, faculty formation)

2. Evangelization of families (participation of families in faith formation, other liturgical and spiritual practices, strong parish connection)

3. Percent Catholic enrollment (what ratio exists for Catholic/non-catholic? How important is this type of evangelization?)

4. Socialization for pupils (Are class sizes too small or too large to allow for meaningful
    interaction and socialization among students?)
5. Viable parish/school relationship (religious formation opportunities for students and staff, active participation in parish life)
6. Past perception of the school (What has been the perception of the school by the parish over time? What was the point of view of the previous pastor?)
7. Pastor/Parishioner support for school (What is the consensus of the local board, pastor, and others? Is there a local consensus regarding the long term outlook for the school?)
8. Surrounding community (Assess the importance of the Catholic school presence in the
    surrounding civic community.)

B. Excellence in Education
1. **Student performance verifies an excellent academic program**
    Academic achievement: How do test scores compare to overall diocesan, state and national scores?
    Is there an increasing level of attainment toward excellence?
    Is there sufficient potential to raise the standard of education in the near future?

2. **Certified and competent staff committed to lifelong learning**
    What is the school's ability to hire and retain qualified teachers?
    Are positions continually unfilled?
3. **Qualified and competent leadership committed to the growth and development of Catholic schools**
    Are there clearly defined professional development plans?
    Is there an additional burden of management and administrative tasks falling on staff?

4. **Criteria for excellence in Catholic education**
    School Improvement Plan, and other appropriate accreditation processes
        Accreditation status:
    What is the overall accreditation status of the school and teachers?

If not currently accredited, is full accreditation achievable in the near term?
        Are diocesan guidelines being met?

5. **Parent involvement**
        Assess support of family/school association, and school board or education committee

6. **Maximum utilization of externally funded programs and other initiatives as appropriate.** Grants, technology programs, Title Programs

C. Temporal Vitality
1. **Stable enrollment trends**
        Was there a growth or loss of students over a five-year period?
        Assess community demographics: ages of children, number of households, Catholic population.
        Project enrollment using current trends, including baptismal records.

2. **Balanced budget with appropriate management systems**
        Parish subsidy: amount of parish subsidy to school as a percentage of per-pupil cost.
        Is there a trend over time of increased or decreased subsidy?
        Assess per-pupil cost relative to other schools.
        What is the trend in tuition increases over time?

3. **Long-range fiscal plan**
        Diverse sources of revenue
        Endowment fund with local plan to grow the endowment
        The tuition covenant (cost-based model providing needs-based assistance to families)

4. **Viable development program**
        Is there an ongoing marketing plan?

5. **Well-maintained facility that supports a full-service education program**
        What is the condition of the building and physical plant?
        Assess critical health and safety factors.
        What is the ratio of under-utilization against overall building capacity?

Appendix F
Action Plans

Definition: an action plan is the explicit portion of a given goal that outlines the tasks required to implement the program, the person(s) responsible, the anticipated date of completion and the cost benefit analysis.

Role of Action Plans in the School Improvement Plan Process
The *action plans* comprise the concluding component of the **School Improvement Plan**. In effect, *action plans* are the blueprints that move the goals to the operational level. Each *action plan* describes a specific set of steps that, if accomplished, result in the successful achievement of a goal. Prior to developing the steps, it is important to be clear about the problems or opportunities the goal is targeting, so that the steps of the *action plan* clearly and systematically address specific needs. In carrying out the *action plans*, priority is given to the most urgent steps relative to Mission, objective and/or goal. This is followed by a determined logical order that reflects manageability and resources. Not all *action plans* will break new ground. It is probable that some will confirm existing programs and services that merit continued emphasis.

Action Item Form

Put each action item on a separate sheet.

School_____
Date_____

Criteria category (Place a check mark next to the category
this action will impact.):

☐ Catholic Spirit ☐ Excellence in Education ☐
Temporal Vitality

Action Item Title:
_____

Action Item
Description:_____
____

Person
Responsible:_____
_____

Specific
Tasks:_____
_____

Timeline and/or Completion Date:

Costs and/or Total Cost:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Appendix G
Assessment Instrument Scoring Form

      On the following pages you will find the three main categories along with the accompanying criteria within each main category. You will also see the number of points assigned to each criterion. A total of one hundred (100) points are available in each main category.   A perfect score would be 100 points for each main category and 300 points for the entire assessment document.

Assessment Scoring Form		
Catholic Spirit	Potential Score	Score
1. Strong catholic identity (daily prayer, instruction, service, integration into curriculum, faculty formation	20	
2. Evangelization of families (participation of families in faith formation, other liturgical and spiritual practices, strong parish connection)	15	
3. Percent Catholic enrollment (What ratio exists for Catholic/non-Catholic? How important is this type of evangelization?)	10	
4. Socialization for pupils (Are class sizes too small or too large to allow for meaningful interaction and socialization among students?)	10	
5. Viable parish/school relationship (religious formation opportunities for students and staff, active participation in parish life)	15	
6. Past perception of the school (What has been the perception of the school by the parish over time? What was the point of view of the previous pastor?)	5	
7. Pastor/Parishioner support for the school (What is the consensus of the local board, pastor, and others? Is there a local consensus regarding the long-term outlook for the school?)	15	
8. Surrounding community (Assess the importance of the catholic school presence in the surrounding civic community)	10	
Total	100	

Excellence in Education	Potential Score	Score
1. Student performance verifies an excellent academic program • Academic achievement: How do test scores compare to overall diocesan, state and national scores? • Is there an increasing level of attainment toward excellence? • Is there sufficient potential to raise the standard of education in the near future?	20	
2. Certified and competent staff committed to life-long learning • What is the school's ability to hire and retain qualified teachers? • Are positions continually unfilled?	20	
3. Qualified and competent leadership committed to the growth and development of Catholic schools • Are there clearly defined professional development plans? • Is there an additional burden of management and administrative tasks falling on staff?	20	
4. Criteria for excellence in Catholic education • School Improvement Plan, and other appropriate accreditation processes Accreditation status: • What is the overall accreditation status of the school and teachers? • Is not currently accredited, is full accreditation achievable in the near term? • Are diocesan guidelines being met?	20	
5. Parent involvement • Assess support of family/school association, and school board or education committee	10	
6. Maximum utilization of externally funded programs and other initiatives as appropriate. • Grants, Technology Programs, Title Programs	10	
Total	100	

*

Temporal Vitality	Potential Score	Score
1. Stable enrollment trends • Was there a growth or loss of students over a five-year period? • Assess community demographics: ages of children, number of households, Catholic population. • Project enrollment using current trends, including baptismal records.	25	
2. Balanced budget with appropriate management systems • Parish subsidy: amount of parish subsidy to school as a percent of per-pupil cost • Is there a trend over time of increased or decreased subsidy? • Assess per-pupil cost relative to other schools. • What is the trend in tuition increases over time:	25	
3. Long-range fiscal plan • Diverse sources of revenue • Endowment fund with local plan to grow the endowment • The tuition covenant (cost-based model providing needs-based assistance to families)	15	
4. Viable development program • Is there an ongoing marketing plan?	15	
5. Well-maintained facility that supports a full-service education program • What is the condition of the building and physical plant? • Assess critical health and safety factors • What is the ratio of under-utilization against overall building capacity?	20	
Total	100	
Grand Total		

	300	

Appendix H
Assessment Instrument Scoring Guide

This guide may provide some assistance in determining the numerical scores to assign to each criterion. Some things to look for are indicated.

Catholic Spirit

1. Strong Catholic Identity
High (15-20) Detailed evidence of:
Prayer, liturgy, community service involving staff and students, activities during Advent and Lent, opportunities for reconciliation, Catholic faith integrated into all curricular areas, staff formation and staff retreats.
Middle (8-18) Some evidence of items listed in "High".
 Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

2. Evangelization of Families
High (11-15) Detailed evidence of:
Participation and involvement of families in faith formation, strong connection to parish, involvement of parents/guardians in religion assignments/homework projects.
Middle (6-10) some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-5) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

3. Percent of Catholics Enrolled
High (8-10) Detailed evidence reflecting:
Ratio of Catholics and non-Catholics enrolled, how non-Catholics are involved in   evangelization in school activities.
Middle (5-7) some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-4) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

4. Socialization for Pupils
High (8-10) Detailed evidence of:
Ability to have class sizes which allow for meaningful interaction and socialization for students - if classes are large, is an aide present for at least part of the day?
Middle (5-7) Some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-4) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

5. Variable Parish/School Relationship
High (11-15) Detailed evidence of: Religious formation opportunities for students and staff, the school and its constituents are involved in the life of the parish, a healthy cooperation exists between the parish and the school

personnel regarding the use of the buildings/rooms for CCD classes, parish activities, etc.
Middle (6-10) Some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-5) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

6. Past Perception of School
High (4-5) detailed evidence of: A continued positive perception of the school by parishioners, strong pastoral support in numerous ways.
Middle (3) Some evidence of items listed in "High". In addition, has the parish perception of the school diminished recently or has a chance in pastoral leadership caused support for the school to decline?
Low (1-2) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High". In addition, parish support for the school has been low and/or declining over a period of time and/or the pastor is not supportive of the school's role in the parish.

7. Current Pastor/Parishioner Support for the School
High (11-15) Detailed evidence of:
     Positive support for the school by the board, pastor and parishioners, united effort by all for the continued life of the school, a bright future for the school exists.
Middle (6-10) some evidence of the items listed in "High". In addition, there seems to be at least some difference of opinion among the board, pastor and/or parishioners concerning the stability and/or future of the school.
Low (1-5) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High". In addition, there seems to be little support for the school now or for the future, by the board, pastor and/or parishioners. A positive outlook for the school is minimal or missing entirely.

8. Surrounding Community
High (8-10) Detailed evidence of:
     The school's importance to the greater community, in proximity to the school.
Middle (5-7) Some evidence of the items listed in "High".
Low (1-4) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".

Excellence in Education

1. Student Performance Verifies an Excellent Academic Program
High (15-20) Detailed evidence of:
     High academic achievement by students on standardized tests, potential for continued academic improvement, students being honored/awarded for academic excellence, existence of opportunities for students to participate in local/regional/national academic competitions and existence

of programs that provide additional help/support to students
who need extra academic assistance.
Middle (8-14) Some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

2.Certified and Competent Staff Committed to Life-Long Learning

High (15-20) Detailed evidence of:
    The school's ability to hire/retain strong, qualified
teachers and administrators, all
    positions being filled, teachers on staff to teach
    "pull out" programs (art, PE, music, foreign
    language, technology, etc.), teachers being able to
    attend workshops/conferences/conventions to improve
    teaching and delivery to students, strong in-service
    program is in place for all staff members and
    administrative expectations for teacher accountability
    are high.
Middle (8-14) some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

3.Qualified and Competent Leadership Committed to the Growth and Development of Catholic Schools

High(15-20) Detailed evidence of:
    The existence of clearly defined Professional
Development Plans, an adequately staffed office which allows
for maximum efficiency in leading, guiding and managing the
school and all of its programs and organizations, visibility
of the principal in classrooms and in other parts of the
school on a daily basis.
Middle (8-14) Some evidence of items listed in "High".
Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High".

4. Criteria for Excellence in Catholic Education

High (15-20) Detailed evidence of:
    The presence of a school improvement plan/process,
adherence to all diocesan guidelines, attainment of the
highest accreditation designation provided by the state
education department, a cooperative relationship with the
Diocesan Education Office.
Middle (8-14) Some evidence of the items listed in "High".
in addition, if the school does not hold the state's highest
accreditation designation, the possible of receiving it in
the near future is strong.
Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".
In addition, if the school does not hold the state's highest
accreditation, the possibility of receiving it in the near
future is limited.

5. Parent/Guardian Involvement

High (8-10) Detailed evidence of:

Strong support and involvement by the parent/guardian association and the board and a strong volunteer program is in place to bring additional assistance, support and resources into the school.

Middle (5-7) Some evidence of the items listed in "High".

Low (1-4) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".

6. Maximum Utilization of Externally Funded Programs and Other Initiatives as Appropriate

High (8-10) Detailed evidence of:

The school's use of available grants and all local, state and federal programs. The school is very proactive in applying for grants and Title monies.

Middle (5-7) Some evidence of items listed in "High". The school is minimally proactive in applying for grants and Title monies.

Low (1-4) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High". The school applies for no grants or Title monies.

Temporal Vitality

1. Stable Enrollment Trends

High (19-25) Detailed evidence of:

At least stable, if not increasing, enrollment in the past five years; and the use of parish demographics including number of households, baptismal records and ages of children.

Middle (10-18) Some evidence of items listed in "High". In addition, the school's enrollment has dipped 10-20% during the past five years.

Low (1-9) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High". The school's enrollment has dropped more than 20% during the past five years.

2. Balanced Budget with Appropriate Management Systems

High (19-25) Detailed evidence of:

Strong financial support for the school by the parish, comparison of budget to Catholic schools of similar size in the area, and a relatively stable history of tuition increases over time.

Middle (10-18) some evidence of items listed in "High". In addition, parish financial contributions to the school have not kept pace with the needs of the school and/or tuition increases are inconsistent (i.e. no increases for two years then a very large increase in the third year.)

Low (1-9) Minimal evidence of items listed in "High". In addition, the parish has severely reduced its financial

assistance to the school or the parish makes no financial contribution to the school's budget.

3. Long-Range Fiscal Plan
High (11-15) Detailed evidence of:
      Diverse, multiple sources of revenue, the existence of an endowment fund and a
willingness to move toward a cost-based tuition and needs-based-assistance tuition model.
Middle (6-10) Some evidence of the items listed in "High".
In addition, the school has little revenue other than tuition/fees and has too large of a gap to make up between tuition/fees collected and the projected budget.
Low (1-5) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".
In addition, the school has no revenue other than tuition/fees and has too large of a gap to make up between tuition/fees collected and the projected budget.

4. Viable Development Program
High (11-15) Detailed evidence of:
      A development program that includes an active marketing plan, a fundraising program that is well constructed and meshes with the school's community and vision.
In addition, active use is made of an "Exit Interview Form," tracking reasons why people
withdraw their children from the school.
Middle (6-10) Some evidence of the items listed in "High".
Low (1-5) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".

5. Well-Maintained Facility/Campus that Supports a Full-Service Education Program
High (15-20) Detailed evidence of:
      Well-maintained buildings which do not pose health/safety issues. In addition, does the school have the buildings and the space that it needs to provide a quality spiritual and academic education to its students?
Middle (8-14) some evidence of the items listed in "High".
Low (1-7) Minimal evidence of the items listed in "High".

Appendix I
School Outlook Report Card

Score	Percent	Description
270-300	90-100%	School has a strong positive outlook
240-270	80-90%	School has a good outlook
210-240	70-80%	School has an acceptable outlook
180-210	60-70%	School has a marginal outlook
150-180	50-60%	School has a negative outlook
Under 150	Under 50%	School is non-viable

Professional Development

Purpose: The intent of this Assessment Criteria is to reach a consensus judgment relative to each statement that will focus the formulation of planning objectives and strategies as well as confirms implementation of the school's mission.

It is recommended that this form serve as a summary compilation of agreed-upon ratings. Based on the aspect of the school being considered, appropriate school constituencies should be represented in the determination of the rating.

Directions: From data collected and discussions held,
SCALE CODE
respond to the following assessment statements by marking
5 fully fulfills the mission
 the scale.
4 adequately fulfills the mission
At the bottom of this form indicate those consulted
3 progress toward the mission
 and whether the placement on the scale indicates an average
2 deficient and needed
 of distributed surveys, consensus or another method of
1 not applicable
 determination.

Professional Development	5	4	3	2	1
1 The school provides formal and informal opportunities for spiritual development for faculty and staff.					
2. The faculty, staff and administration annually reflect on the mission statement and its implementation relative to school policies and procedures.					
3. Opportunities exist for the faculty to engage in collective inquiry and reflection on current practice, student performance and significant school issues.					
4. Professional development opportunities include faculty and staff involvement in responsible decision-making directed toward school improvement.					
5. Formal and informal feedback on instructional practices is a regular part of professional development.					
6. The results of student assessment, faculty evaluations and school reviews are used to develop both personal and school plans for professional growth.					
7. Faculty and staff regularly participate in professional development opportunities.					
8. The professional development program is planned, coherent and ongoing.					
9.School leaders and faculty and staff have an active role in shaping professional development opportunities for faculty.					
10. The school requires faculty to articulate professional growth plans that are consistent with school wide goals.					
11. Professional growth plans and school wide goals are the basis for faculty supervision.					
12. Formal and informal support systems are in place for beginning teachers to ensure understanding of mission, ease in the school culture and teaching success.					
13. Formal and informal support systems are in place for those new to the school to ensure understanding of mission, ease into the school culture and experience teaching success.					
14. Professional development programs are evaluated by participants.					
15. Professional development programs are evaluated					

relative to instructional improvement.					
16. Professional development opportunities exist for non-teaching staff members.					
17. The school provides ways for faculty and staff to share professional growth experiences with others.					
18. Faculty members and administrators hold membership in professional organizations.					
19. Faculty members and administrators hold leadership roles in professional organizations.					
20. The school recognizes excellence in its faculty and staff.					
21. The school funds and supports professional development opportunities.					
22. Faculty and staff have adequate access to technology support.					

The assessment is a compilation of _____surveys
distributed to: (indicate number in each category)

_____ Administration   _____faculty   _____students
_____board members

_____Parents   _____other:
_____

Other methods used to determine assessment ratings:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Report completed by:
_____Date: _____

Committee:_____
_____

FOCUS FOR PLANNING

Professional Development

Refer to the **Assessment Criteria** form in preparing the **Focus for Planning**. This **Focus for Planning** is important for **School Improvement Planning.**

Strengths

The professional development information gathered in this section identifies the following strengths.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Questions and Issues: Respond to those areas pertinent for planning.

- The position and scope of professional development in the school raises the following questions and/or issues relative to mission and planning.

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

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SAMPLE
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

	Responsible	Involved	Timeline	Sample Calendar:
1. Convene planning committee	SH	AD	1 month	Jan. 2007
2. Review protocol and process	SH	PC	1 month	Jan. 2007
3. Identify facilitator and define the role	SH	PC, AD	1 month	Feb. 2007
4. Determine timeline	FA	AD, PC	1 month	Feb. 2007
5. Develop, revise, affirm **Foundation Documents**	SH, PC	CON	3 months	Feb.-April **will vary**
6. Administer **Needs Assessments:** performance data, perception data, demographic data	SH, PC, FA	AD, CON, FC	2 months	March-April
7. Identify key questions and issues	FA	AD, PC	3 months	April – June
8. Formulate *objectives*	FA	PC	3 months	April - June
9. Develop Assessments to evaluate progress of objectives	FA, SH	AD, FC	2 months	July –Aug.
10. Formulate *strategies*	FA	FC, PC	2 months	July – Aug.
11. Communicate draft *objectives* and *strategies* for revision and ratification	SH	CON, GOV	2 months	July – Aug.
12. Form *action plan* committee	PC	FC, CON	2 months	July – Aug.
13. Develop *action plans*	FA	FC, AD	2 months	Aug. - Sept.
14. Review *action plans*	SH	PC	1 month	Sept.
15. Develop *Staff Development*	FA, SH	PC, FC	1 month	Sept.
15. Communicate **School Improvement Plan** for ratification	SH	FC, CON	1 month	Sept.
16. Approve **School Improvement Plan**	SH	GOV	1 month	Oct.
17. Communicate **SIP**	SH	CON	ongoing	Oct.
18. Implement *action plans*	SH, PC	FC, AD	ongoing	Nov…….
19. Validate the **SIP**	PC	CON	ongoing	2008

CODES

AD = Administration   **GOV** = Governing Body
CON = Constituents   **PC** = Planning Committee
FA = Facilitator   **SH** = School Head
FC = Faculty

TEMPLATE
For a
School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Aligned to the

SD Department of Education SIP Rubric

How to Use this Optional Template

This template is intended as an information organizer and is not a required format for SIPs in the Sioux Falls Diocese. A school improvement team may use any format it chooses. As well, use of the template does not guarantee approval of a SIP.

The components and criteria in the template match the components and criteria the South Dakota Department of Education uses to approve SIPs.

It may be useful to have the SD DOE criteria, "School Improvement Checklist", listed previously in this document, on hand when using this template. The checklist may also be obtained on the DOE web.

A school improvement plan (SIP) is a public document and should not contain confidential information about teachers, staff, students, families/parents, or community.

Sioux Falls Catholic Diocese

School Improvement Plan
Cover Sheet
School Information

1. School System Name:

2. Administrator:

3. School Name:

4. School Address:

5. Grade Levels of the School:

6. Years Covered by the Plan:

7. Contact Person:

8. Phone Number:

9. Email Address:

FOUNDATION DOCUMENTS

(Insert school's Beliefs, Mission, and Vision Statements. Include dates that documents were approved. List constituents who had input to the development of the documents.)

NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

(Insert quantitative data and qualitative data as explained in the "Data Gathering" section. Appendix D "Data Sheet" may be used and inserted here as well as the results from Appendix G "Assessment Instrument Scoring Form" ".)

SCHOOL PROFILE
(Using information gathered from the surveys, from data and demographic sources, provide a narrative and/or list specific document citing specific examples of your school's achievement or non-achievement of each criterion – Catholic Spirit, Academic Achievement, Temporal Vitality. Develop a set of conclusions based on the data.)

Goals and Assessment

(Insert student performance goals based upon data. Be sure they are measurable and appropriate for all students. Each goal should include an assessment plan including criterion referenced assessment such as the Dakota STEP, or the SAT10, assessment within the context of regular classroom teaching, or perception data such as follow-up studies or student/parent satisfaction surveys. The data should begin with benchmark assessment data and include interval data collected at appropriate points. There should be a set of assessments for each of the goals within the SIP.)

Intervention Strategies

(Insert Appendix F "Action Item Form", one for each goal, that will outline the intervention strategies designed to achieve the desired outcomes of the selected goals.)

Staff Development

*(Insert the results of the staff development survey and the
staff development plan that results from the survey and that
is aligned with and supports the schools goals for academic
achievement. The plan should support multiple opportunities
for teachers to engage in training in the implementations of
teaching strategies based on current research. Regularly
scheduled opportunities should also be provided for teachers
and administrators to collaborate about best teaching
practices and to examine student work to determine the most
effective practices.)*

Documentation

(Periodically insert changes in student performance for each of the selected goals. Review the pre and post-test data at regular intervals to judge the success of the interventions in causing growth to occur. Results of this analysis should be reported to the school community.)